The Fascist "Strategy of Tension":
Conflict and Collusion with Elected Governments

By Ken Lawrence

The relationship between fascist movements and popularly elected governments is contradictory and treacherous. Fascists strive for positions of influence, both to manipulate policy and to defeat their political opponents on the left, even as they plot to undermine and overthrow the governments they serve. The French fascist Michel Faci, known as "LeLoup" (the Wolf), named the practice that fascists adopted after World War II to weaken and discredit parliamentary government after fascism had reached the limit of power that could be achieved legally "the Strategy of Tension."

The Strategy of Tension involves terroristic destabilization of everyday activities, designed to discredit elected leaders' governance by exposing their inability to preserve peaceful order. Often with the collaboration of security police and prosecutors, the strategy involves falsely blaming parties on the political left for violence perpetrated by fascists.

Aftermath of the 1974 coup in Portugal revealed secrets of an extensive fascist network in Europe and America, summarized in the February 12, 1975, *Liberation News Service* article I have appended to this memo. Among the most important discoveries was a 1969 document blandly titled "Our Political Activity," which explained the fascists' strategy. In his biography of Stefano Delle Chiaie, founder of the Italian fascist paramilitary organization Avanguardia Nationale (AN), Stuart Chritie quoted these excerpts:

> **Our belief is that the first phase of political activity ought to be to create the conditions favoring the installation of chaos in all of the regime's structures. This should necessarily begin with the undermining of the state economy so as to arrive at confusion throughout the whole legal apparatus. This leads to a situation of strong political tension, fear in the world of industry and hostility towards the government and the political parties. . . . In our view the first move we should make is to destroy the structure of the democratic state, under the cover of communist and pro-Chinese activities. Moreover, we have people who have infiltrated these groups and obviously we will have to tailor our actions to the ethos of the milieu — propaganda and action of a sort which will seem to have emanated from our communist adversaries and pressure brought to bear on people in whom power is invested at every level. That will create a feeling of hostility towards those who threaten the peace of each and every nation, and at the same time we must raise up a defender of the citizenry against the disintegration brought about by terrorism and subversion. . . .**
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> **Outside the present contingencies these people are possessed of a new enthusiasm and huge impatience. This fact should be carefully considered. The introduction of provocateur elements into the circles of the revolutionary left is merely a reflection of the wish to push this unstable situation to breaking point and create a climate of chaos. . . .**
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> **Pro-Chinese circles, characterized by their own impatience and zeal, are right for infiltration. . . . Our activity must be to destroy the structure of the democratic State under the cover of communist and pro-Chinese activities; we have already infiltrated some of our people into these groups.**

Today's readers of these passages might ponder whether the chronic economic and social turmoil inflicted by Donald Trump's policies is an intentional feature, not an unintended bug, of his administration's governance. Replacing European fascists' declared enemies in the 1969 document with Trump's currently targeted foes might provide a more coherent insight into the intended outcome of MAGA policies than most published speculation about his aims — destabilizing policies that range from onerous tariffs and dismantled government agencies to ICE occupation of cities and overseas wars that lack coherent objectives.

Viewed in that light, Trump's January 6, 2021, insurgency served MAGA as Adolf Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch served the Nazi Party and as Benito Mussolini's March on Rome served the Fascist Party. Pardons for Trump's January 6 heroes and martyrs have advanced his legend and have emboldened his impassioned supporters by implicitly pledging them amnesty for future acts of political violence.

Some false-flag actions conducted by Italian fascists and their government enablers had become public before the trove of Portuguese documents surfaced. On December 12, 1969, a group of AN fascists who had infiltrated an anarchist group carried out four coordinated bombings — one in Milan that killed 14 people, and three in Rome that injured 107 — while three other AN members attempted to plant hidden explosives in Italian Communist Party branch headquarters. The latter group were caught in the act and fled. A week later, police arrested and charged six men with perpetrating the bombings, identifying them as anarchists, but reporters quickly revealed their actual fascist connections. After being tried and convicted, Mario Merlino, one of the AN fascist perpetrators, told a reporter that a Carabinieri (Italian military national police) officer and subordinate had recruited the AN group to conduct the operation. A February 11, 1998, article in *La Repubblica* (translation attached here) reported U.S. Central Intelligence Agency involvement also.

In 1971 and 1972 in San Diego, California, Richard Nixon's Federal Bureau of Investigation created and controlled a fascist group called the Secret Army Organization, which engaged in spying, destruction of property, bombings, and attempted assassinations, described in the attached June 27, 1975, *New York Times* article. Not only was this activity similar to the Carabinieri's involvement in Italian fascist terrorism; it might have reflected collaboration between them.

In 1979 a source leaked to me a syllabus from an international symposium on terrorism, hosted by the FBI at Langley, Virginia, which included a speaker, Italo Salvatore Brunetti of the Italian National Police, whose presentation attributed support of violence to nearly every leftwing organization in Italy. He called for mass incarceration without trials as the most effective police response, with intellectual leaders of the left as primary targets of repression.

In my original attempt to get the classified symposium syllabus on the record in a way that would protect my source, I asked Monica Andres of the Center for National Security Studies to file a Freedom of Information request for proceedings of the symposium. The FBI reply to her application falsely denied that the seminar had been held and denied that such documents existed. Switching to Plan B, I flew to Italy, delivered the book-length syllabus to a comrade, stayed long enough for him to record an interview, and left the country by train while his program aired on Radio Populare.

Less than a year later, Jimmy Carter's State Department refused to issue entry visas to the Italian husband-wife comedy performers Dario Fo and Franca Rame, preventing them from performing their act in the United States. After *The Nation* published an editorial that protested the denial, I notified Victor Navasky, the editor, that the FBI might have facilitated the

government smear of the theater couple. In the symposium syllabus, Brunetti had named Fo and Rame as supporters of terrorism, even though they had categorically opposed violence, because the legal and prisoner support organization that they founded, Soccorso Rosso (Red Aid) had provided assistance to leftists regardless of their affiliations.

Navasky invited me to write the story of FBI collaboration with the Carabinieri documented in the secret syllabus, which he published without attribution as the second item in the page attached to the end of this memo copied from the August 2-9, 1980, issue of *The Nation*.

Keeping these events in perspective, it's important to remember that they did not succeed in imbuing fascists with popular appeal and political momentum in the United States, but they do indicate that attempts were in play to implement the Strategy of Tension here, soon after its adoption in Europe. Meanwhile, European fascists had embedded themselves in a secret paramilitary network that NATO had established in the 1950s, funded by the CIA, which did not become publicly known until 1990.

Originally called "stay behind" forces, these consisted of anti-communist cells in Italy, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, with parallel operations in non-NATO countries Austria, Finland, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, supplied with weapons of war, including machine guns, grenades, explosives, and light artillery that could be mobilized to conduct behind-the-lines espionage, armed assaults, and sabotage missions in the event their countries were invaded by Warsaw Pact armies. To assure that they consisted of hard-core anti-communist fighters, their ranks were filled with Nazis and fascists.

Several of those countries had strong domestic Communist Parties, which the NATO and CIA strategists called "Fifth Column" forces of the Warsaw Pact. Those parties, especially the strongest one in Italy, became the targets of the secret fascist armies. The program became officially known when Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti acknowledged the existence of the program, in Italy named "Operation Gladio," as reported in the October 26, 1990, *Daily Telegraph* and October 28, 1990, *Observer* articles I have appended. Ever since that disclosure, the entire multinational NATO-CIA "stay behind" force has been called Gladio.

Bit by bit, drip by drip, reporters revealed that the Gladio forces had conducted false-flag "Strategy of Tension" terror bombings of the 1960s and 1970s. In Allan Francovich's 1992 three-part BBC documentary motion picture *Gladio*, the unrepentant Italian fascist bomber Vincenzo Vinciguerra explained that killing innocent people — commuters and other train passengers, department store shoppers, and children — was the point of the strategy. In the aftermath, people were not merely fearful; they understood that elected governments were incapable of protecting them. Only a ruthless dictatorship, unrestrained by legal procedures and delays, could crush their enemies and restore order.

Licio Gelli, venerable master of the fascist Propaganda Due masonic lodge, explained to Francovich that Operation Gladio actually began in Italy in 1948, before NATO was founded, consisting of nine-member squads, each with two leaders who knew the secret locations of arms dumps and money, carefully recruited for their prior service as fascist army Spanish Civil War veterans and men from the fascist Republic of Salò ranks. In 2023 an Italian court disclosed evidence and testimony that proved Gelli had financed the August 2, 1980, Bologna train station bombing, the deadliest terrorist attack (85 dead, 202 wounded) in Italy since the end of World War II. The actual perpetrators were officials of the Italian secret intelligence service.

Few analysts who write critically about MAGA fascism seem to understand the potential extreme dangers posed by the fascist Strategy of Tension.

PORTUGUESE DOCUMENTS REVEAL JOURNALISTIC COVER FOR INTERNATIONAL FASCIST GROUP; LINK GROUP TO BOMBINGS COUNTERINSURGENCY AND ARMS TRAFFIC

LIBERATION News Service

(Editor's note: The following was compiled largely from reports in "Liberation," an independent French leftist daily. Some information came from Le Monde and the New York Times.)

NEW YORK (LNS) -- Milan, Italy. December 12, 1969: a bomb explodes in a Milan bank, leaving sixteen people dead and over one hundred wounded. Some days later, several leftists are arrested and charged with the bombings. They are to spend the next two years in jail on false convictions.

Late in 1971, an investigation by the Italian police that had continued despite the bombing convictions, lead to the arrest of two Italian publishers who really were involved in the plot: Franco Freda and Giovanni Ventura. And last year a third man, a high ranking agent of the Italian secret police named Guido Giannettini was arrested in connection with the bombing.

In the course of their investigation, the Italian police have come up with evidence that links a mysterious European press service, "Aginter Press" to a European-wide neo-fascist organization.

And their evidence points to Aginter director Yves Guillou, alias Guerin Serac and another Frenchman, Robert Leroy, as being the principle organizers of many of the bomb explosions in Italy in recent years including the one in Milan.

According to this report, Aginter Press served as a cover for an international fascist organization responsible for the planning and execution of many fascist attacks throughout Europe in recent years.

The Portuguese Papers

Five years after the 1969 bombing and shortly after the April 25, 1974 coup in Portugal, an investigation by officers of the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement (MFA) that overthrew the Portuguese dictatorship, corroborated the findings of the Italian investigation.

After the coup in Portugal, thousands of agents of the PIDE, the brutal and hated secret police under Portugal's fascist regimes, were rounded up and jailed.

On the night of May 21, 1974, the questioning of one PIDE agent revealed that the Lisbon-based Aginter Press Agency had served as a base of support for PIDE, and as a center for the coordination of the activities of related fascist organizations in other countries.

The following day, a group of MFA officers searched the former offices of Aginter Press, which were by then deserted. There they discovered a mass of information and archives on the activities of the agency, as well as a laboratory for the manufacture of many types of false documents.

As for the leaders of Aginter Press, they mysteriously disappeared from Lisbon shortly before the April 25 coup. Robert Leroy surfaced recently in an interview in an Italian paper. Several weeks later, Yves Guillou gave an interview to the French magazine "Paris Match," in which he denied involvement in fascist activities.

"I am only an anti-communist journalist, naturally," he said. "As for Aginter, it is merely an organization for ideological struggle. I have never worked for PIDE and still less have I ever received money from it."

The Formation of Aginter Press

But the Portuguese documents tell a different story. According to them, Aginter was formed in 1962 largely by former members of the German Gestapo and the French Secret Army Organization (OAS). With strong links to PIDE, Aginter quickly offered its agents courses in sabotage, espionage and terrorism. These "skills" were learned primarily from their experience in the OAS during the war for Algerian independence in the late fifties and early sixties.

After 1965, with the help of PIDE funding, the agency began a coordinated effort to infiltrate European left and extreme left movements. At the time, their activities were concentrated in Italy, France, Switzerland and Germany.

According to the archives in Lisbon, Aginter also developed into a recruitment and training program for rightist terrorists and mercenaries operating throughout the world. The documents say Aginter provided lessons in sabotage and counterinsurgency programs, as well as a manual of instructions on how to resist interrogation.

Aginter was involved, as well, in counter-revolutionary activities in the 1960s in many African countries such as Guinea-Bissau, the Congo (now independent Zaire), Gabon, Senegal and Angola.

The documents also link the former press agency to a network of European neo-Nazi organizatinns currently active throughout Europe such as Europe Action, the Black Order (an Italian organization with suspected involvement in a recent conspiracy for an ultra-rightist takeover of the Italian government), and the New European Order.

And the archives are said to name several high ranking political figures in France and Germany as involved in these organizations.

In the most recent development, dozens of rightists met in Lyons, France, December 27, 28 and 29, 1974, at a quiet congress of the "New European Order." They represented fascist organizations in France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Denmark and Latin America. The meeting also included Czechoslovakian and Yugoslavian exiles, according to the New York Times report.

Among the participants was Yves Guillou, former director of Aginter Press.

"New European Order" was founded in 1951 by former Nazis who escaped execution at the end of

World War II. Its founders still head the organization. They are Gaston Amaudruz, former Gestapo agent now living in Lausanne, Switzerland, a Swedish Nazi named Per Engdahl, and Maurice Bardeche from France.

A declaration issued after the congress demanded the immediate release of Nazi war criminal Rudolf Hess, still in jail in West Germany. The Order says Hess has been "imprisoned for more than thirty years for having wanted to re-establish peace, along with numerous comrades who fought for Europe."

Among others mentioned by the Order's declaration was Jacques Vasseur who, according to Le Monde, was well known to the French resistance as a collaborator with the Gestapo in France.

Following the conference came a report from Italian magistrates revealing a heavy arms traffic from Marseille to Africa, controlled by "MGM," an Italy-based import-export agency, controlled by European fascists.

Formed in the early '70s, its alleged purpose is "the acquistion and sale of all commercial products," but the organization, it has been revealed, is mainly involved in buying heavy military equipment including tanks, bomber planes, missiles and submachine guns. The Italian investigation has linked several Italian participants at the fascist congress in Lyons with MGM.

MGM apparently buys arms from French, Swiss and Belgian manufacturers, through two middlemen, Gilbert Lapeyrie, a former Gestapo agent, and Cesar Dauwe. The arms, then, have been primarily sold in Africa. Dauwe was arrested and temporarily freed when his involvement with an arms shipment bound for Ghana was discovered.

"What is particularly disturbing in this affair," wrote the French paper, Liberation, recently, "is that fascists can control a flow of arms of such importance and particularly to Africa. You can count those who are capable of selling these kinds of weapons on the fingers of one hand. And when you understand the French and American interests in this area, it's clear that this traffic couldn't take place without their knowledge."

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NEWARK UNEMPLOYMENT RALLY BUILDS FOR WORKERS SOLIDARITY DAY

NEWARK, N.J. (LNS) -- "Why Unemployment?" was the focus os a forum held in Newark, February 9, attended by recently laid off and unemployed people. Sponsored by the Congress of Afrikan People in Newark, the forum included members of the United Auto workers and the Newark Construction Trades, the National Welfare Rights Organization, and the United Black Workers.

The forum, and a rally scheduled in Newark for February 16, are part of a series of similar events held around the country to build up to Workers Solidarity Day on February 22, when demonstrations are planned in seventeen cities, including Washington, D.C., Houston, Newark, St. Louis, Detroit, Philadelphia and New York.

Unemployed people, labor, welfare and other groups are expected to participate.

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For more information on what will be going on in your area, contact the Congress of Afrikan People, 502 High St., Newark, N.J. 07102. Tel: (201) 621-2300.

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RED FACES FOR RED-BAITERS

WASHINGTON (LNS) -- The government's veteran witch-hunters are not as single-minded and effective as you might think. Columnist Jack Anderson reports that the top officials for the Senate Internal Security Committee, whose chairman is the lifelong anti-communist, James Eastland, have lately been concentrating their search for subversives in such hotbeds of radical activity as the vacation resorts in Reno, Miami, San Juan and Mexico City.

The Committee's chief counsel, Julian G. Sourwine, regularly charges the government for trips to the roulette tables of Reno. Sourwine got the government to pay for his airfare, car rentals and daily expenses, but insists that he pays off his own gambling debts.

Sourwine was one of the government's most renowned Red-baiters during the McCarthy period, and continued his work into the sixties with investigations of such groups as the United States Servicemen's Fund, Students for a Democratic Society and Liberation News Service.

Sourwine's chief investigator has spent money on trips to Miami where he owns property and to Mexico City where he has relatives. Anderson says the two of them "have spent thousands on these junkets."

"I am not a chiseler," Sourwine told a reporter from Anderson's office. When he was asked how his wife happened to wind up on the congressional payroll, he replied, "I think you're despicable."

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JUSTICE DEPT. PROPOSAL REQUIRES WORKERS TO PROVE CITIZENSHIP

WASHINGTON (LNS) -- If the Justice Department gets its way, everybody who applies for a job in the U.S. will have to show their prospective employer proof of citizenship before they can get a job.

According to a Justice Department proposal submitted to the House Judiciary Committee, employers would be required to "take affirmative action to determine whether each applicant is an American citizen or alien entitled to work."

If the proposal is passed into law, each job applicant would be required to produce a birth certificate or certification from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

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(Thanks to the Daily World for this short.)

Investigation into "Black Subversion" Concluded
—Spanning the Late 1960s and Early 1970s—

Piazza Fontana Massacre:
U.S. Agent Implicated
Judge Salvini's Ruling Reconstructs the "Strategy of Tension"

By GIOVANNI MARIA BELLU

ROME — It was once considered the wildest fantasy of conspiracy theorists. In the 1970s, there were those who simply laughed it off: it seemed inconceivable that the intelligence service of an allied nation could be behind the massacres. As of a few days ago, however, that very hypothesis is formally enshrined in a judicial document: David Carret—a U.S. Navy officer and CIA operative in Italy—is now under investigation in Milan for political-military espionage, as well as for complicity in the Piazza Fontana massacre (Milan, December 1969) and other attacks perpetrated during that era.

It was Investigating Judge Guido Salvini who decided to forward the documents pertaining to Carret to his colleague, Grazia Pradella, the magistrate currently presiding over the inquiry into the Milan massacre. He did so upon the conclusion of his own investigation into "Black Subversion"—a monumental undertaking begun in July 1988, which yielded 92 case files and 60,000 pages of documentation, and involved 463 separate interrogations.

Over the course of these ten years, Judge Salvini has effectively rewritten some of the darkest chapters of Italy's post-war history. His findings are not, however, exclusively accusatory in nature; among the elements emerging from his inquiries (a point highlighted yesterday by the investigative team) are details lending support to the argument regarding the "legitimacy" of the Gladio network. Regrettably, the statute of limitations on many of the alleged crimes prevents full justice from being served, thereby diminishing the ultimate impact of the magistrate's painstaking work. Only the most heinous offenses have withstood the erosion of time—and political-military espionage is one of them. Salvini thus ordered the indictment of Sergio Minetto—the Italian official in charge of the NATO-U.S. intelligence network—and the turncoat agent Carlo Digilio. Summoned to appear before the judges alongside them are two historic figures of the "Black Subversion": Yves Guerin Serac and Stefano Delle Chiaie.

From Judge Salvini's investigative work—and specifically from the cross-verification of every statement made by the turncoats—it emerges that the subversive organizations of that era—*La Fenice*, *Avanguardia Nazionale*, and *Ordine Nuovo*—were nothing more than the trench troops of a clandestine army, remotely controlled by figures within the State apparatus and linked to the CIA.

In this scenario, the Piazza Fontana massacre becomes something more than just a terrorist attack. As one of the most authoritative witnesses to this history, Vincenzo Vinciguerra, puts it: "The massacre of December '69 was intended to be the detonator that would have enabled certain political and military authorities to declare a State of Emergency." The plan failed: the then-Prime Minister, Mariano Rumor—contrary to what the neo-fascists and their allies had anticipated—did not declare a "state of emergency" following the Piazza Fontana massacre, an act essential for the establishment of an authoritarian regime. And so, the decision was made to make him pay. The opportunity arose on May 17, 1973, during a visit he paid to the Milan Police Headquarters. Gianfranco Bertoli (a self-styled anarchist, yet linked to the Intelligence Services and the fascists) threw a bomb into the crowd. Rumor escaped unharmed, but four people lost their lives.

And here is what the *pentito* (state witness) Digilio recounted regarding the days leading up to the attack on the Police Headquarters: "...Captain Carret appeared deeply concerned and stated that things could end badly. He added that if such a high-ranking State official were indeed struck, the ensuing investigations would be extremely thorough, running the risk of exposing the entire organizational structure and revealing everything that had taken place—including past events, such as the terrorist attacks and the coup plot of the years 1969–1979." Yet the American Intelligence Services did not merely "know"; they were actively involved. Digilio again, speaking on the Piazza Fontana massacre and the coup attempt: "Subsequently, Captain Carret confirmed to me that this project had indeed met with the approval of the Americans as well, and that it had failed due to the vacillation of certain Christian Democrats, such as Rumor."

Judicial archaeology? A story from the past? One is left to wonder. This holds true even when reading—at the beginning of the ruling—Judge Salvini's critical observations regarding the "extremely scant" support the Milanese court has received over these past years. Yet this very doubt evaporates upon the discovery that, in the very recent past (in 1995), the CIA's liaison in Milan, Carlo Rocchi, was caught in the act of gathering intelligence on the investigation. It was an investigation that instilled—and continues to instill—fear. So much so that the heirs to yesterday's perpetrators of massacres contemplated eliminating ROS (*Raggruppamento Operativo Speciale* [Special Operation Group]) Captain Massimo Giraudo, one of the Milanese judge's key collaborators.

La Repubblica (February 11, 1998)

A.C.L.U. Says F.B.I. Funded 'Army' To Terrorize Antiwar Protesters

By EVERETT R. HOLLES
Special to The New York Times

SAN DIEGO, June 26—The American Civil Liberties Union completed today a report for Senate investigators alleging that the Federal Bureau of Investigation recruited a band of right-wing terrorists and supplied them with money and weapons to attack young antiwar demonstrators.

The 5,000-word account prepared for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence contains what A.C.L.U. lawyers described as "newly established evidence" purportedly linking the F.B.I. to at least two assassination plots here.

The lawyers, H. Peter Young and Mark D. Rosenbaum of the A.C.L.U. Foundation of Southern California, said the allegations to be sent, probably tomorrow, to the Senate committee "document in detail the F.B.I.'s sponsorship in 1971 and 1972 of a San Diego group calling itself "the Secret Army Organization."

Told of the A.C.L.U.'s asserttiodns, a spokesman for the F.B.I. said that the bureau had had "nothing to do" with the establishment of the so-called secret army organization, "nor did we have anything to do with the direction of its activities."

According to the A.C.L.U. report, the Secret Army Organization was set up "on instructions of F.B.I. officials" to serve as agents provocateurs, inciting disorders as a means of exposing "domestic radicals," particularly campus leaders of the New Left protesting the war in Southeast Asia.

The paramilitary extremist organization, consisting of about a dozen members locally with others scattered throughout southern California, was described by the A.C.L.U. as an outgrowth o fan elaborate interagency espionage apparatus "at the direction of Richard M. Nixon" early in his Administration to intimidate and silence domestic critics.

Assassination Alleged

The group's acts of terrorism, allegedly carried out in San Diego on instructions from the F.B.I., range from espionage, vandalism and mail theft to bombings, assassination plots and shootings, accordingg to the report.

The A.C.L.U. charges followed by two days the F.B.I.'s acknowledgement, in a 256-page document, that it conducted counterintelligence operations between May, 1968, and April, 1971, under the code name, Cointelpro. Hhese were aimed at the New Left and designed to harass and discredit campus antiwar and leftist groups.

The A.C.L.U. maintained, however, that F.B.I. sponsorship of the "Secret Army" terrorism continued into 1972.

The accusations contained in the report to the Senate committee go considerably beyond those of a $10.6-million damage suit filed by A.C.L.U. attorneys in Federal Disrict Court here last Jan. 6 on behalf of Peter G. Bohmer, a discharged economics professor at San Diego State University, and Paula Tharp, a companion.

Miss Tharp was wounded on Jan. 6, 1972, when shots were fired into Mr. Bohmer's Ocean Beach home here from an automobile carrying several members of the so-called Secret Army.

In subsequent court proceedings, it was brought out that Steven L. Christiansen, an F.B.I. agent who was identified by court witnesses as the "control" for the Secret Army Orhome for nearly six months the automatic pistol used in the attack while the police were searching for evidence to bring Mis Tharp's assailant to trial.

Mr. Bohmer, an avowed Marxist, and Miss Tharp, formerly employed by an underground newspaper twice wracked in nighttime Secret Army raids, organized the San Diego convention coalition in mid-1971. The coalition was formed to bring thousands of youthful demonstrators to San Diego to disrupt the 1972 Republican National Convention before the convention site was switched to Miami Beach.

Instructed to Open Mail

The A.C.L.U. report says that John Rasperry, whom it identified as an F.B.I. informer, has admitted that, in the winter of 1971-1972, the bureau instructed him to assassinate Mr. Bohmer, but that the attempt was never carried out.

Mr. Rasperry is also quoted as saying that he was instructed to intercept and open Mr. Bohmer's mail and to plant several M-16 rifles in the former professor's possessions to facilitate his arrest.

Another F.B.I.-directed plot to assassinate Mr. Bohmer was allegedly set up in April, 1972, with Gil Romero, a member of the San Diego Police Department's antisubversive "Red Squad," also described as an F.B.I. undercover agent.

According to the report, Mr. Bohmer and Linco Bueno, a member of the Brown Berets, a left-wing Chicano organization, were to be lured across the Mexican border to a desolate area near Tijuana. There, they were to be killed by the Mexican Federal police for possession of a cache of smuggled weapons.

The plot was abandoned, Mr. Young reported, presumably when the Republican convention was moved to Miami Beach.

The A.C.L.U. lawyers said that Mr. Romero was also offered $4,000 by his F.B.I. "control" if he would implicate Mr. Bohmer in the shooting of a San Diego police officer in the city's Ocean Beach section.

In the $10.6-million lawsuit pending in Federal District Court here, former President Nixon's name heads a list of 58 defendants, including officials of the F.B.I., the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Council and a half-dozen other Government agencies, as well as most of the defendants in the Watergate case.

Daily Reports to Aritchell

Mr. Nixon, according to Federal court records, accepted a summons at his home in San Clemente on Jan. 14.

The F.B.I.'s creation of the Secret Army Organization here, as a successor to the paramilitary Minutemen broken up by the local authorities in 1970, was said by the A.C.L.U. to have been an extension of earlier espionage activities by the bureau, including a 1969 operation with the code name "Inlet."

Under "Inlet," the F. B. I. allegedly made daily intelligence reports involving "demonstrators and domestic radicals" to John N. Mitchell, then the Attorney General, and to Mr. Nixon by way of H. R. Haldeman, the former White House Chiek of Staff, and John D. Ehrlichman, the former Chief Advi er on Domestic Affairs in the Nixon White House.

The A.C.L.U. alleged that when the F.B.I. set up the Secret Army Organization here in 1971, in advance of the Republican convention, it chose as one of its two leaders Howard B. Godfrey, a former San Diego fireman, elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and, for three years, an F.B.I. informer in the Minutemen.

Mr. Godfrey testified at the 1973 trial of another member of the Secret Army Organization who was convicted of bombing a motion picture theater that the F.B.I. furnished him or paid for $10,000 to $20,000 worth of weapons and explosives for the so-called Secret Army Organization over a period of five years. As a member of the Minutemen and later the Secret Army Organization, he said he was paid about $250 a month by the bureau.

In addition to the F.B.I.'s direct control over the Secret Army, the White House allegedly maintained contact with the group through Donald H. Segretti, who was later convicted for directing a campaign of political espionage and sabotage against the Democrats in 1972.

Mr. Segretti was quoted by the A.C.L.U. as having told the Secret Army that any potential troublemakers at the 1972 Republican convention would be "gotten rid of," an apparent reference to the so-called Liddy plan alluded to during the Senate Watergate hearings, whereby the leaders of anti-Nixon elements would be kidnapped and taken to Mexico.

The plan was devised by G. Gordon Liddy, former counsel of the Committee for the Re-election of the President, who was convicted of conspiracy, burglary and wiretapping in the Watergate case.

ITEM. ITEM. ITEM.

■ **Much has been written about the impropriety of Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti's conversation with President Carter advising him to advise Billy to register as a foreign agent. Prof. Alan Dershowitz of the Harvard Law School has cited it as a casualty of the A.G.'s conflicting roles—on the one hand he is chief law enforcement officer, on the other he is "the President's lawyer." In fact the notion of the A.G.-as-President's-lawyer became outmoded with the advent of a full-time White House counsel (currently Lloyd Cutler, who referred Billy to the lawyer he eventually retained) and the only conflict Civiletti had was between principle and power. Did he want to administer the law evenhandedly, letting justice take its course, or was he more interested in ingratiating himself with the man who might have the power to fill the next vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court?**

What is not generally known is that at the same time Civiletti was demonstrating solicitude for the well-being of the President's brother, he was considering what Justice should do about enforcing the judgment it won against Frank Snepp, the former C.I.A. agent, for writing about the C.I.A. without its permission. The A.G.'s decision so far (notwithstanding contrary advice from John Hersey, Robert Penn Warren and others who believe it is wrong to fine a writer for telling the truth) is to squeeze every last penny out of Snepp—to force him to give the Government any and all moneys he received from his publisher. This, despite the fact that all parties concede that Snepp revealed nothing that was classified (in interesting contrast to the classified cables that the President showed his brother). This is called prosecutorial discretion.

■ There may be more to the State Department's decision to deny visas to Italian dramatist Franca Rame and her husband, playwright Dario Fo, than was apparent at the time of our editorial on the case [see "The Undesirables," June 7]. As you may recall, Rame and Fo were barred under a regulation prohibiting entry to persons belonging to groups supporting the violent overthrow of any government, and because, as a State Department official put it, "Fo's record of performance with regard to the United States and our own interests is not good." The department was not moved by the fact that Rame and Fo are opposed to terrorism and that their involvement with Italian terrorists of the Red Brigades is through a group called Soccorso Rosso (Red Aid), which provides legal assistance.

Now we have received information suggesting that the State Department ban may have been influenced by American intelligence agencies. In July 1979, the F.B.I. held an international symposium on terrorism in Langley, Virginia, at which a prominent speaker was Dr. Italo Salvatore Brunetti, a "terrorism specialist" with the Italian National Police. In the course of a speech linking nearly the entire Italian left with the Red Brigades, Brunetti delivered this aside: "We must briefly make reference to the 'fellow travelers' or supporters, who, though not being members of the Red Brigades, lend their valuable support in ideological sympathy. Among these supporters we have to mention the exponents of Soccorso Rosso (Red Aid), chiefly represented by two well-known stage actors, Dario Fo and his wife, F. Rame." It seems not unlikely that Italian police asked U.S. counterintelligence to put in a bad word for Rame and Fo when the latter announced their intention to visit the United States.

Postscript: When Monica Andres of the Center for National Security Studies made a Freedom of Information Act request for the proceedings of the terrorism symposium, the Bureau told her none existed. The Bureau, unfortunately, lied; the proceedings were published and distributed to the participants.

■ **At a time when Congressional hawks are demanding a higher percentage of the gross national product be devoted to defense spending to match the Soviet Union's putative 11 to 14 percent (this figure comes from the Defense Department's annual report for fiscal 1981), figures published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development show that U.S. nonmilitary aid to developing countries shrunk to only 0.19 percent of the G.N.P. in 1979—down from 0.27 percent in 1978. The U.N. has long advocated that the industrialized and OPEC nations meet a target of 0.7 percent of their G.N.P.s.**

Meanwhile, the world arms race is bullish. Last year, according to a report by Ruth Leger Sivard, a former U.S. Government arms control adviser, the nations of the world spent roughly $425 billion on their military establishments; expenditures on swords (and guns, tanks, bombs, missiles, etc.) are 2,500 times what is spent for ploughshares and other implements of peace. In terms of sheer tonnage, Sivard estimated, there is more explosive material on the planet than food. Total arms expenditures, in 1960 dollars, are 70 percent higher than they were twenty years ago.

■ The American hostages in Iran may be officially on the White House back burner, but watch for the heat to be turned up quickly if they become an issue in the fall election. Such was the conclusion taken away from a meeting with Administration officials by twenty representatives of Washington peace groups. After describing the current two-prong policy of diplomatic and economic pressure, a State Department representative said (in the paraphrase of one of those in attendance): "If these efforts do not bear fruit, come September/October, there will be a reassessment and more forceful measures will be adopted. He described these measures as possibly meaning a blockade and/or the mining of Iranian ports. An unstated but obvious presumption is that the likelihood of these moves could depend on President Carter's standing in the pre-election polls."

The Administration spokesman ruled out any possibility of an "apology" or other acknowledgment of past U.S. involvement in Iran and said a Congressional inquiry was highly unlikely. In sum, the Iranian situation may depend as much on Ronald Reagan's campaign oratory as on the Ayatollah Khomeini's sibylline utterances.

CAREY McWILLIAMS

For a printed transcript of the remarks delivered at the July 10th memorial service for Carey McWilliams, please send $1.00 (to cover the cost of production and mailing) to Karen Wilcox at *The Nation*.

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The Daily Telegraph (London, Greater London, England) · Fri, Oct 26, 1990 · Page 15
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Secret army admission by Andreotti

By Alison Clements

A SECRET paramilitary service, set up under Nato in case of invasion by Communists, did — and still does — exist in Italy, according to Signor Giulio Andreotti, Prime Minister.

Operation Gladio, or Lance, was born from a resistance network established in 1951 and was designed to co-ordinate 1,000 men and women, civilian and military, who would stay behind as a guerrilla group during an enemy occupation.

But for almost 40 years, senior government figures have denied its existence.

Finally, last August, Signor Andreotti admitted that a Nato group, armed with guns and explosives, had existed but claimed it had been disbanded in 1972.

However, in parliament this week, under questioning, he disclosed that Gladio still existed, although without arms.

The question Italian MPs will now have to answer is whether any of the anti-Communist personnel played a part in the so-called "strategy of tension" in the 1970s:

The series of terrorist attacks at that time, including the bomb which killed 85 people at Bologna station in 1980, are widely believed to have been carried out by neo-fascists in an attempt to destabilise the country and to prevent the Communist party coming to power.

"It has to be established if, among those attached to Operation Gladio, there are the names of those involved in acts of destruction," said one MP.

In a document sent to a commission investigating Italian massacres, Signor Andreotti said Gladio had worked in agreement with the Italian secret services and also with the CIA. Every Western country, he said, had a similar network during the cold war.

But while the document claims Gladio was disarmed in 1972, it is known that not all of the explosives and guns, scattered in various hide-outs throughout Italy, were recovered.

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Ghost of murdered Moro returns to haunt the embattled Christian Democrats

Italians' secret guerrilla army dragged out of the shadows

Rome

William Scobie

HEADS are rolling in Rome following Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti's bombshell revelation last week that, for the past 40 years, Italy has hosted a parallel Nato organisation with arms dumps all over the country and guerrilla warfare experts under top secret cover.

The purge of the rival secret services marks a milestone in Andreotti's power struggle with Socialist Party boss and former Premier, Bettino Craxi.

In a week rife with political scandals and sensations, including the disclosure of a cache of embarrassing letters written in captivity by Christian Democrat leader Aldo Moro before his murder by the Red Brigades in 1978, Admiral Fulvio Martini, the chief of SISMI, Italy's MI5, was sacked. The sacking, say his friends, was for no better reason than that he was 'a Craxi man', appointed by the Socialist chief when he headed the government in 1984. Another Craxi ally in charge of SISDE, the civilian secret service, is also on the way out.

The admiral's dismissal caused an ugly scene in Parliament on Wednesday as the Craxi faction launched a full-scale counter-attack on the unsinkable Andreotti.

It was in the midst of this row that the Prime Minister let the cat out of the bag about the activities of the parallel secret services, which were officially supposed to surface only in the event of enemy invasion.

A stunned House learnt that a 12-page document outlining the facts had been declassified at the insistence of a commission on terrorism — but with two pages removed. It stated that the CIA and its Italian equivalent, SIFAR — the most covert in the alphabet soup of Italy's secret services — had signed a protocol entitled 'Stay Behind' to recruit a clandestine paramilitary force that would work underground in the event of a Soviet occupation.

The CIA, it was made clear, virtually ran all the various Italian secret services (as in Greece) for decades after the war. American money poured into Italy to preserve the rule of the Christian Democrats and hold back the red peril.

Operation Gladio (gladium being the two-edged sword used by Roman gladiators) was the name given to the plan that would be activated when the Soviet invaders came: it was a detailed scheme for a resistance movement to be led by 1,000 men trained by the CIA and the British secret service.

The various groups would be co-ordinated by a General Staff base in Sardinia after the mainland had been overrun.

And was Gladio still in effect?

Yes, said Andreotti blithely, but now that Communism had collapsed it would be wound up. And what of those arms dumps? They had already been gathered in — all but two, which had contained light arms and were mysteriously missing.

These weapons, the Socialists claim, ended up in the hands of right-wing terrorists, some recruited for the anti-Soviet resistance, with the connivance of the authorities. The 'Black Terror' groups, financed by the neo-fascist P2 Masonic Lodge headed by Licio Gelli, committed some of the worst bombing outrages of the 'Years of Lead' in the 1970s.

Several commissions are looking into the terrorism of recent decades. So far they have always been blocked by the Christian Democrat rulers.

Radical MP Roberto Cicciomessere, the one man in Parliament who managed to see the two missing pages before they were snatched away for censorship, says: 'This is not mere suspicion: the document said the guerrillas enrolled were strictly screened, but obviously many would be far-right subversives.'

The Left in Rome now sees Operation Gladio as the thread linking right-wing terror to the dominant Christian Democrats in the so-called 'strategy of tension' that was intended to halt a Communist takeover and impose a new fascist rule.

More than 100 rightist groups took part in murders and bombings that led up to the Bologna railway station massacre that left 85 dead and 200 injured, in the bloodiest act of terrorism in post-war Europe.

'The bombers were protected by the police, and later acquitted by the courts,' says Cicciomessere. 'It was a case of blood and absolution.'

In the same period, leftist terror by the Red Brigades reached a climax in the 1978 kidnapping and murder of former Premier Aldo Moro. During renovation of a Milan flat once used as a Red Brigades hideout a cache of 419 documents and letters written by Moro in captivity was discovered. Interior Minister Antonio Gava resigned in the midst of the row, pleading ill-health. Then Moro's daughter, Maria Fida, a Senator, quit the Christian Democrats to become an independent.

In one of his letters — written during 55 days in a Red Brigades Rome hideout — a bitter Moro said that if he lived he would certainly have resigned from the party.

'I have been killed three times over,' he wrote to Francesco Cossiga, then Interior Minister, now President. 'By inadequate protection, by your refusal to negotiate, and by weak statements that enraged my captors.'

Maria Moro said last week: 'On reading my father's last pledge, I had no choice but to resign.'

Moro's stinging attacks on Cossiga, Andreotti and others who, he said, abandoned him to his fate by refusing to exchange him for Red Brigades prisoners, gave Craxi a new opening.

In one of his most furious attacks to date the Man Who Would Be King called Christian Democrat chieftains 'beasts snarling around the gallows'.

Andreotti retorted that the 'find' was no accident, and used the row as one excuse for sacking Martini. The Red Brigades flat was torn apart by police 12 years ago — how could they have missed this hoard?

Clearly, the Prime Minister's aides let it be known, the papers had been found at the time and stashed away for future use by someone high in security. Senate President Giovanni Spadolini, a Moro family friend, fears that 'more explosive material' is in the hands of 'trouble-makers' and will soon be released.

The turmoil is tearing apart the flimsy fabric of the five-party coalition and opening the way, Craxi hopes, for constitutional reform that would create a new presidential authority, with De Gaulle-like powers to bring Italy into the twenty-first century.

Letters written by Moro in captivity before his killing 12 years ago have sparked off a row involving (from left) Cossiga, Moro's daughter Maria, and Andreotti.

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